(b) Yes Sir. The administrative expenditure of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) exceeded the actual allocation by Government to the extent of 118% under this head during the period 1995-96 to 1999-2000.

(c) No, Sir. KVIC has not diverted Rs. 135.21 crores from Plan to Non-Plan head.

(d) Does not arise.

**Mining Rights Along Coastal Area of Kerala**

441. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to State:

(a) whether Government have received any applications from private companies through the State Government of Kerala seeking approval for getting lease for mining right to mine the mineral resources along the coastal area of Kerala;

(b) if so, the number of such applications and the details of such private companies;

(c) whether Government have taken any decision on the applications;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not the action proposed to be taken on the same; and

(e) Government's reaction to lease out the coastal area having immense mineral wealth of strategic importance to private companies for mining operations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. An application from M/s. Cochin Minerals and rutiles Ltd. (CMRL) for grant of mining lease for 9 areas admeasuring 40.05 hects. in Alappuzha Dist., Kerala has been received through the Government of Kerala and is being processed in accordance with the prescribed procedure.

(e) In tune with the general policy of decontrol and liberlisation the Government of India *vide* Resolution of 6th October 1998 has noitified a modified policy on exploitation of beach sand minerals, according to which wholly owned Indian companies are allowed to engage in mining and mineral separation activities after obtaining requisite mining lease from the State Government concerned and a licence from the Department of Atomic Energy. Similarly Joint Venture Companies (including with foreign direct investment

upto 74%) are also allowed to set up facilities for value addition to the minerals or integrated facilities for mining, mineral separation and value addition.

**Rare Earth Mineral deposits in Kerala**

442. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to State:

(a) what is the expected quantity of rare earth mineral deposits in the coastal area of Kollam and Allepey Districts of Kerala;

(b) whether Government have conducted any study in this regard;

(c) if so, the findings thereof;

(d) whether Government have received any applications seeking order for high level probe into the alleged move of leasing out the mining rights to a particiles company;

(e) if so, the action taken in the matter and details thereof; and

(f) if not the action proposed to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) The Atomic Mineral Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD), a constituent Unit of the Department of Atomic Enrgy (DAE) has been carrying out exploration of beach sand mineral resources of the country for over five decades. On the basis of studies carried out so far, rare earth mineral (monazite) occurring in the beach sand of Kerala coast including resources of lakes and sea beds, is esimated at 1.35 million tones.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) and (f) In tune with the general policy of decontrol and liberalisation of the Government of India *vide* Resolution of 6th October, 1998 has notified a modified policy on exploitation of beach sand minerals, according to which wholly owned Indian companies are allowed to engage in mining and mineral separation activities after obtaining requisite mining lease from the State Government concerned and a licence from the Department of Atomic Energy. Similarly Joint Venture Companies (including with foreign direct investment upto 74%) are also allowed to set up Facilities for value addition to the minerals for integrated facilities for mining, mineral separation and value addition. The